

0
 COPIES APPEARED
 (1984) A-1

WASHINGTON TIMES
 21 November 1984

Westmoreland says CBS program humiliated him

NEW YORK (UPI) — Gen. William Westmoreland, his head bowed and face flushed, testified emotionally yesterday that he was humiliated — even before his own children — by a 1982 CBS documentary.

The documentary, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception," alleged Gen. Westmoreland lied to his superiors and purposely kept the estimate of enemy troop strength below 300,000 to make it appear he was winning the war.

One of the program's crucial points was that about 20,000 enemy troops per month were infiltrating South Vietnam prior to the Tet offensive in January and February 1968.

Gen. Westmoreland, who filed a libel suit against CBS, producer George Crile and correspondent Mike Wallace, has claimed that the rate of infiltration was much lower.

The general said he received calls from his children and from many friends following the broadcast.

"They expressed concern, disillusionment," he said. "It was a most unbelieving experience, a humiliating experience."

Mr. Burt read portions of a letter Gen. Westmoreland received that said he should be "stripped of all honor. You played God with these kids. You lied to President Johnson. I hope the American people never give you a moment's rest."

He also read a telegram Gen. Westmoreland received after the broadcast from Linda Shelton, a Houston woman, who wrote, "You knew those boys were going to their deaths, and so did they. You played God with their lives. And to this day, many American parents are still grieving."

And he quoted a New York Times editorial

that ran a few days after the broadcast which said, "Lyndon Johnson himself was victimized by mendacious intelligence. . . . Even after so many years, Gen. Westmoreland still tries to explain away the falsification of intelligence, even to the commander in chief."

According to CBS, Gen. Westmoreland's staff pressured the CIA and other intelligence analysts in late 1967 to stop including some communist political workers and "irregular" forces in the official estimate of enemy strength.

The general maintained on his direct testimony that the irregulars, organized as "self-defense" and "secret self-defense" forces, consisted of old men, women and young boys and were no military threat.

Gen. Westmoreland had interrupted his testimony Monday to allow William Bundy to take the stand because of a scheduling conflict. Mr. Bundy served as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from March 1964 through May 1969.

Although he had expressed "grave doubts" about an intelligence conspiracy as charged in the CBS broadcast, Mr. Bundy agreed in part that the rate of infiltration was about 20,000 a month in December 1967 and January 1968. The Tet offensive broke out Jan. 30, 1968.

On Monday, Gen. Westmoreland testified it would have been "totally inconceivable" for 20,000 North Vietnamese troops to infiltrate South Vietnam undetected in the fall of 1967.

Mr. Bundy, who briefed members of Congress and reporters on the progress of the war, was privy to classified information.